STEVE ROGERS CAPTAIN AMERICA® 5

Steve★Rogers
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Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve Rogers
CAPTAIN AMERICA

Steve Rogers' reality has been secretly rewritten by the sentient Cosmic Cube named Kobik, who was acting under the influence of the Red Skull. Now, because a Hydra agent named Elisa Sinclair saw Steve's potential and recruited him as a young boy, Steve is fully committed to Hydra--but not to the Red Skull.

Steve went behind the Red Skull's back to secure a secret lab for Dr. Erik Selvig, a Cosmic Cube expert and undercover Hydra agent whom Steve was supposed to kill. His goal? Restore Hydra to its true ideals... by assassinating the Red Skull.

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Captain America created by Joe Simon & Jack Kirby

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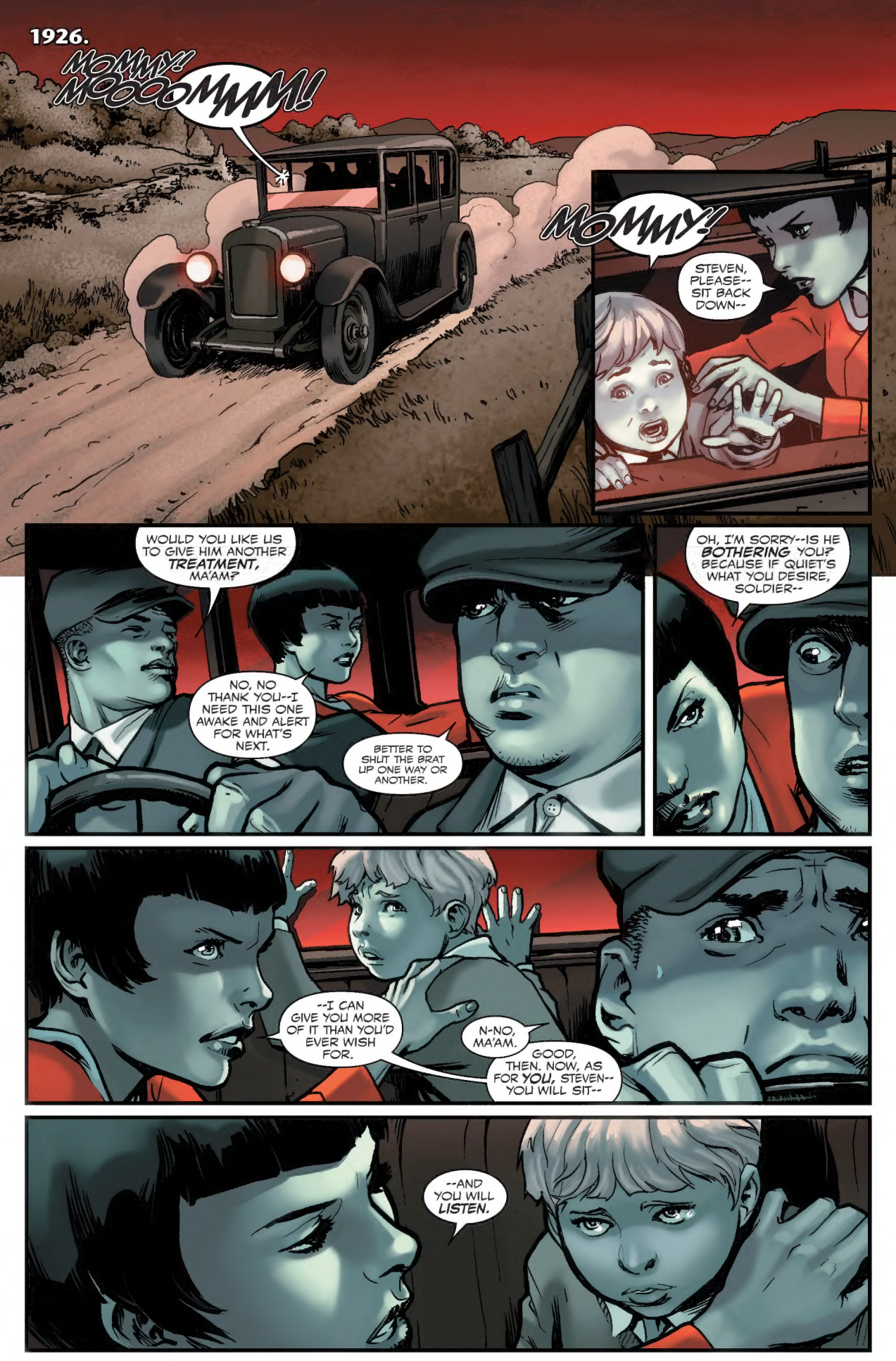
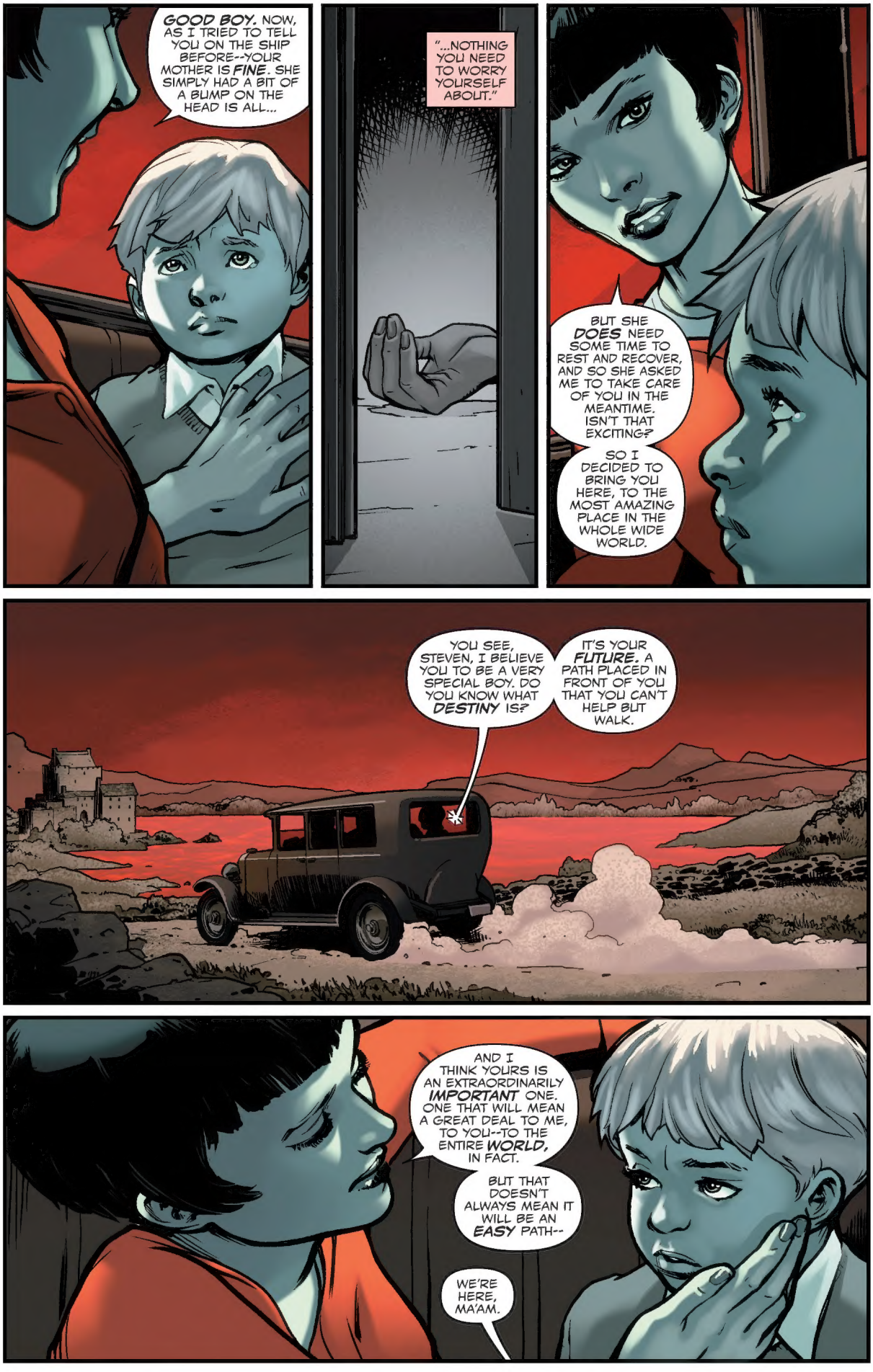

1926.
MOMMY! MOOOMMM!
MOMMY!
STEVEN, PLEASE-- SIT BACK DOWN--
WOULD YOU LIKE US TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER TREATMENT, MA'AM?
NO, NO THANK YOU--I NEED THIS ONE AWAKE AND ALERT FOR WHAT'S NEXT.
BETTER TO SHUT THE BRAT UP ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
OH, I'M SORRY--IS HE BOTHERING YOU? BECAUSE IF QUIET'S WHAT YOU DESIRE, SOLDIER--
--I CAN GIVE YOU MORE OF IT THAN YOU'D EVER WISH FOR.
N-NO, MA'AM.
GOOD, THEN. NOW, AS FOR YOU, STEVEN-- YOU WILL SIT--
--AND YOU WILL LISTEN.

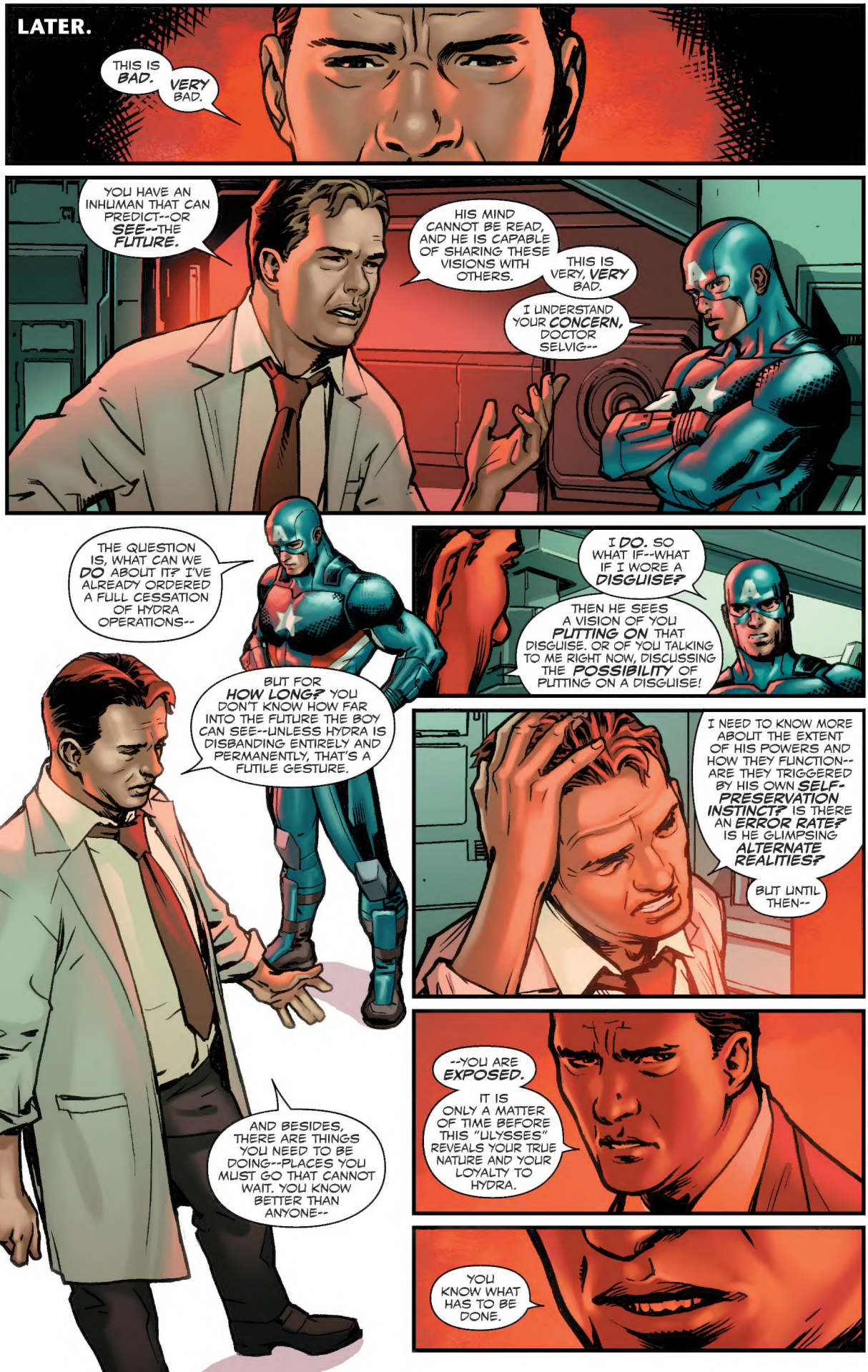

GOOD BOY. NOW, AS I TRIED TO TELL YOU ON THE SHIP BEFORE--YOUR MOTHER IS FINE. SHE SIMPLY HAD A BIT OF A BUMP ON THE HEAD IS ALL...
"...NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT."
BUT SHE DOES NEED SOME TIME TO REST AND RECOVER, AND SO SHE ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU IN THE MEANTIME. ISN'T THAT EXCITING?
SO I DECIDED TO BRING YOU HERE, TO THE MOST AMAZING PLACE IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.
YOU SEE, STEVEN, I BELIEVE YOU TO BE A VERY SPECIAL BOY. DO YOU KNOW WHAT DESTINY IS?
IT'S YOUR FUTURE. A PATH PLACED IN FRONT OF YOU THAT YOU CAN'T HELP BUT WALK.
AND I THINK YOURS IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY IMPORTANT ONE. ONE THAT WILL MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO ME, TO YOU--TO THE ENTIRE WORLD, IN FACT.
BUT THAT DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN IT WILL BE AN EASY PATH--
WE'RE HERE, MA'AM.

OH, DEAR. NOW, LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY, STEVEN--THIS NEXT PART IS KEY.
THIS PLACE WILL ASK THINGS OF YOU--DIFFICULT THINGS--SCARY THINGS--BUT IF YOU REMAIN STRONG--IF YOU DO EVERYTHING THAT IS ASKED OF YOU, THEN I PROMISE YOU--
--YOU WILL SEE YOUR MOTHER AGAIN.
C-CLK
AH, AT LAST YOU ARRIVE, ELISA--
--WE WERE BEGINNING TO WORRY.
AND THIS MUST BE THE YOUNG STEVEN ROGERS YOU WIRED ABOUT. WELL, THEN--
--IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, YOUNG MAN.
MY NAME IS DANIEL WHITEHALL, AND THIS IS MY ASSOCIATE--
--DOCTOR SEBASTIAN FENHOFF.
NOW LET'S GET YOU BOTH INSIDE, SHALL WE? SO MUCH TO DISCUSS--

"SO MANY GREAT PLANS."
SOKOVIA.
WE ALL HAVE PLANS, OF COURSE.
THE MAPS THAT LEAD FROM OUR HOPES AND DREAMS TO REALITY.
THE STEPS WE TAKE TO REACH OUR GOALS.
THE BEST PLANS CONSIDER EVERY OBSTACLE, EVERY PITFALL--
AN ANSWER FOR EVERY QUESTION.

THEY'RE GUIDED THROUGH WITH LOVE AND CARE--
ESTABLISHING PERIMETER NOW-- SECURITY NETWORK IS OFFLINE.
COPY. CLOSE IN. MOVE TO SURROUND THE BUILDING.
--AND UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.
THEY CLOSE OFF EVERY EVENTUALITY UNTIL ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE PRIZE.
THEY FOCUS IN ON THAT, AND PRECLUDE EVERYTHING ELSE, REFUSING FAILURE EVEN THE SLIGHTEST OPENING--
BUT THE WORLD IS A COMPLICATED, DANGEROUS PLACE.
AND NO MATTER THE PLANS WE MAKE--
--THERE'S NO ACCOUNTING FOR EVERYTHING. REST ASSURED--

--SOMETHING WILL ALWAYS GO WRONG.
THIS IS ULYSSES.
WE HAVE AN INHUMAN WE'VE NEVER MET, WHOSE MIND IS A CLOSED BOOK, WHO CAN SOMEHOW TELL US "A" FUTURE...
AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU?
IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU YESTERDAY.
Stand down.


LATER.
THIS IS BAD. VERY BAD.
YOU HAVE AN INHUMAN THAT CAN PREDICT--OR SEE--THE FUTURE.
HIS MIND CANNOT BE READ, AND HE IS CAPABLE OF SHARING THESE VISIONS WITH OTHERS.
THIS IS VERY, VERY BAD.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, DOCTOR SELVIG--
THE QUESTION IS, WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT? I'VE ALREADY ORDERED A FULL CESSATION OF HYDRA OPERATIONS--
I DO. SO WHAT IF--WHAT IF I WORE A DISGUISE?
THEN HE SEES A VISION OF YOU PUTTING ON THAT DISGUISE. OR OF YOU TALKING TO ME RIGHT NOW, DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING ON A DISGUISE!
BUT FOR HOW LONG? YOU DON'T KNOW HOW FAR INTO THE FUTURE THE BOY CAN SEE--UNLESS HYDRA IS DISBANDING ENTIRELY AND PERMANENTLY, THAT'S A FUTILE GESTURE.
I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF HIS POWERS AND HOW THEY FUNCTION--ARE THEY TRIGGERED BY HIS OWN SELF-PRESERVATION INSTINCT? IS THERE AN ERROR RATE? IS HE GLIMPSING ALTERNATE REALITIES?
BUT UNTIL THEN--
AND BESIDES, THERE ARE THINGS YOU NEED TO BE DOING--PLACES YOU MUST GO THAT CANNOT WAIT. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE--
--YOU ARE EXPOSED.
IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THIS "ULYSSES" REVEALS YOUR TRUE NATURE AND YOUR LOYALTY TO HYDRA.
YOU KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.

NO-- NO, HE'S A KID--
HE IS A WEAPON. AND I CAN ASSURE YOU--
"--THESE AVENGERS WILL USE HIM AS SUCH."
CAPTAIN, I OWE YOU MY LIFE. AND I BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU SEEK TO DO NOW.
BUT I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU MY BEST COUNSEL...
"YOU ALREADY HAVE ONE LOOSE END THAT CAN DESTROY EVERYTHING YOU ARE BUILDING--"
--DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN ABIDE ANOTHER?
NEW ATTILAN, HOME OF THE INHUMANS.

DON'T DO THIS, TONY.
LAST WARNING: GO HOME.

I HAVE AN IDEA.
I'M ALL EARS.
YOU SAID HIS POWERS MIGHT BE TIED TO HIS OWN SURVIVAL INSTINCTS--OR FOCUSED ONLY ON POTENTIAL GLOBAL-LEVEL DANGER SCENARIOS. IS THAT RIGHT?
WELL, YES-- IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY FOR CERTAIN, BUT BASED ON THE VISIONS HE'S HAD SO FAR, IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY HIS POWERS AT LEAST PRIORITIZE THE BIG THREATS--
SO WE GIVE THEM SOMETHING BIGGER. TELL ME, DOCTOR--
--HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAMMA RADIATION?
ALPINE, UTAH.
DELIVERY FOR MR. ROBERTS?

Dear Doctor Banner,
As a longtime admirer of your work and a fellow scientist, I felt an obligation to share with you my recent findings, which I believe portend a major breakthrough in a field of great interest to us both.
The cure for gamma-irradiated mutations--or Hulks, as they have come to be known.
While the final breakthrough remains frustratingly elusive to me, I believe an expert such as yourself might be able to finish what I have begun.
So I have enclosed my research, in the hopes that it might help start us down a road, one that frees you and others from this terrible curse.
Good luck, Doctor Banner. I hope you find the peace you so richly deserve.
Yours, An Anonymous Friend
SO MANY VARIABLES... SO MANY POSSIBILITIES.
EVEN STILL, I'M NOT THE LEAST BIT SHOCKED BY HOW EVEN THE SLIGHTEST PUSH--

LEADS YOU SO EASILY DOWN THE DARKEST ROAD.
DEATH.
DISTRUST.
RAGE.

ARROGANCE.
WEAKNESS.
IT ALL COMES SO EASILY TO YOU.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY? I CAN TELL YOU THE SECRET--
WAR IS YOUR NATURAL STATE.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU HATED EACH OTHER ALL ALONG.

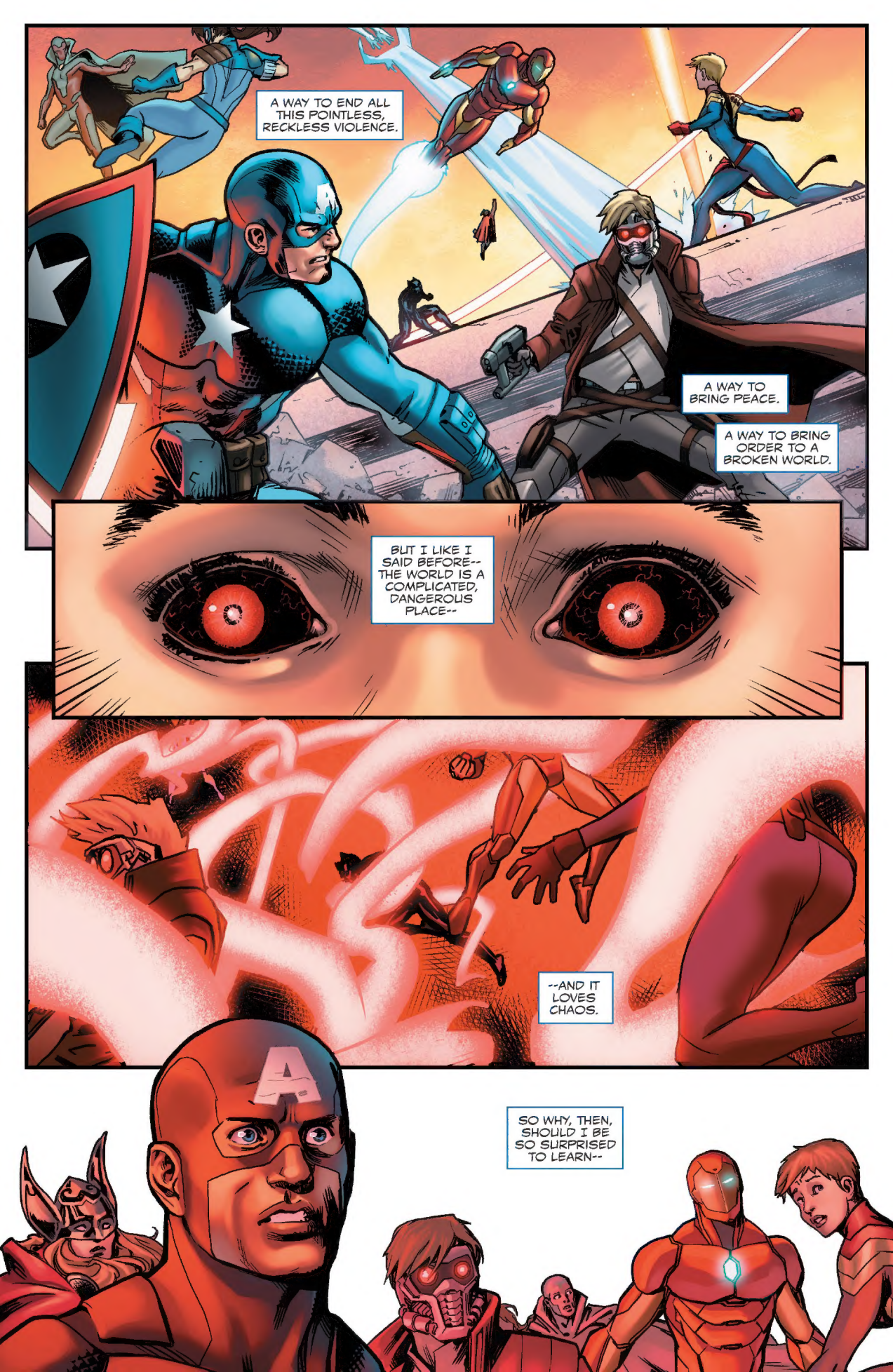
To: Steve Rogers
From: Carol Danvers, Commander, Alpha Flight
Steve,
You're going to hear some things.
Here are the facts.
At 1300 hours, Ulysses had a vision of a coordinated Hydra plot to infiltrate and destroy the world's financial institutions.
The vision led directly to the arrest of one person--
--a financial services manager named Alison Green.
People are going to say we went too far.
They are going to say we are wrong. I just want you to know--
We're not. I've questioned this woman myself--
--and I am certain the kid is right.
"ONE PROBLEM--"

--THERE IS NO HYDRA PLOT TO INFILTRATE AND DESTROY THE WORLD'S FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.
THERE WAS NO ATTACK PLANNED. AND THIS WOMAN--THIS ALISON GREEN--I LOOKED INTO HER. WE HAVE NO RECORD OF HER WITH HYDRA.
INTERESTING. SO THE BOY CAN BE WRONG, THEN...
IT APPEARS SO. BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US?
IT COULD MEAN EVERYTHING. PERHAPS HIS POWERS ARE DEGRADING. PERHAPS THERE'S AN ERROR RATE--THAT WOULD CAST DOUBT ON HIS VISIONS.
THAT WON'T STOP CAROL. SHE'S MADE IT CLEAR--IF THERE'S EVEN A SLIGHT CHANCE HE'S RIGHT, SHE'LL ACT. BY THE WAY...
...THIS IS STARK'S RESEARCH--
EVERYTHING HE'S GOT ON THE KID. I CLONED IT WHILE THEY WERE BUSY BICKERING.
WONDERFUL... THIS--THIS WILL BE MOST HELPFUL. BUT--WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW, THEN?
KEEP DIGGING. EVEN IF HE IS WRONG--ANY VISION ABOUT HYDRA IS CUTTING TOO CLOSE TO COMFORT FOR ME. I NEED TO BE SURE THERE'S NOTHING TO IT--
"--AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO REALLY BE SURE."
INTERESTING.

...AND YOU'RE CERTAIN, SUPREME LEADER? THERE'S NO CHANCE ONE OF THE CELLS IS OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY?
INDEPENDENTLY?!
THERE IS NO "INDEPENDENTLY," HERR ROGERS. THERE IS ONLY HYDRA. AND HYDRA IS THE RED SKULL.
Y-YES. OF COURSE, MY LORD.
HM...MOST INTRIGUING, THOUGH, THIS INHUMAN THAT CAN GLIMPSE THE FUTURE. HE HAS THE POWER TO LAY BARE ALL OUR PLANS...
YES, SUPREME LEADER--I'M TAKING STEPS TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE EQUATION--
YOU WILL DO NO SUCH THING, CAPTAIN!
SIR?
WHO WISHES TO USE THE BOY AGAIN?
CAROL DANVERS, SUPREME LEADER.
THEN YOU WILL SUPPORT CAROL DANVERS IN THIS SILLY "WAR," CAPTAIN.
YOU WILL USE HER TRUST IN YOU TO GET ACCESS TO THE BOY.
OR, IF DANVERS' CRUSADE SEEMS DOOMED, YOU WILL ALLY WITH STARK, AND ONCE THE BOY IS FREE OF HER CLUTCHES, YOU WILL USE THE CHAOS TO OUR ADVANTAGE--
EITHER WAY, YOU WILL FIND THE MEANS TO TAKE HIM-- AND THEN YOU WILL BRING HIM, ALIVE, TO ME. YES--
--HE WILL BE OF GREAT USE TO US, I SUSPECT...

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, ELISA.
LOOK AT HIM! HE'S TINY!
THEY USUALLY ARE AT SIX.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. NOT TO MENTION THAT COUGH--HE IS DISEASED, LIKE THE LAST THREE URCHINS YOU BROUGHT US. AND JUST LIKE THEM--
--HE WOULD NOT SURVIVE THE TRAINING.
YOU'RE WRONG. HIS AURA IS POWERFUL.
HIS--AURA?! DANIEL, HOW MUCH LONGER MUST WE INDULGE THIS MYSTICISM NONSENSE?!
THIS WOMAN IS A CHARLATAN! YOU ASKED ME TO HELP BUILD YOU AN ARMY, NOT FOLLOW THE WHIM OF SOME DRUG-ADDLED ALEISTER CROWLEY DISCIPLE. I WON'T--GG--
GFFFooo?
NOW, FENHOFF--
--YOU SHOULD REALLY WATCH YOUR TONGUE IN MY PRESENCE--
--LEST IT GET AWAY FROM YOU.

WHDD UU DDU?!
MORE THAN A MERE TRICK OF THE MIND, I CAN ASSURE YOU.
ELISA!
THAT'S ENOUGH.
YES, OF COURSE, DANIEL. MY APOLOGIES. YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT SKEPTICS.
BUT I PROMISE YOU--THIS BOY IS THE ONE WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR. THE ONE WHO CAN BREAK THE WHEEL. I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE SURE OF ANYTHING IN MY LIFE.
AND WHAT A LIFE IT'S BEEN.
-SIGH- FINE. WE'LL GIVE THE CHILD HIS CHANCE.
BUT I MAKE NO PROMISES. HE'LL RECEIVE NO SPECIAL TREATMENT. IF HE'S TO SURVIVE, IT WILL HAVE TO BE ON HIS OWN--
"--JUST LIKE ALL THE REST."
I HAD A PLAN OF MY OWN. ONE I'D WORKED A LIFETIME TO REALIZE--


A WAY TO END ALL THIS POINTLESS, RECKLESS VIOLENCE.
A WAY TO BRING PEACE.
A WAY TO BRING ORDER TO A BROKEN WORLD.
BUT I LIKE I SAID BEFORE-- THE WORLD IS A COMPLICATED, DANGEROUS PLACE--
--AND IT LOVES CHAOS.
SO WHY, THEN, SHOULD I BE SO SURPRISED TO LEARN--

--THAT THE WORLD HAS ITS OWN PLAN FOR ME?

NEXT